

WASH STAR 4 MAR 67

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Pact to Limit A-Power Held Vital

The chief military officers of the United States now predict that, if a major war breaks out in Europe, it will be fought with nuclear weapons and that this country will immediately become involved and be subject to nuclear attack.

This bleak prophecy could have a salutary effect. It could bring the Soviet Union and other nations of the world to the conference table to agree on an effective means of checkmating the use of nuclear power.

The American people read on Wednesday morning an announcement that the United States will withdraw 35,000 troops from Europe. This means an obvious weakening of the American ground forces on that continent. But, on the same day, a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives released a censored transcript of testimony given on March 6 by Gen. Earl Wheeler. It quotes the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as challenging the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara against appropriating funds for the deployment of the Nike-X anti-ballistic-missile system. This is the type of defense which the Russians now are building up.

The peoples of Europe are face to face, therefore, with the fact—at last officially confirmed—that there is no realistic plan to defend Western Europe by a large army of ground troops or against Soviet missiles. Instead, the

7,000 nuclear warheads stacked up in Europe will be utilized by a relatively small force for a limited defense and, if necessary, to damage the territory of an aggressor. This in turn could mean a Soviet strike against the American continent. A major war with maximum nuclear power would then become inevitable.

While airlifts by jet planes could put a large number of American troops back into Europe in a short time, dependence is going to be placed in the interim on a small force of ground troops.

The new developments mean that the United States will have to spend many more billions of dollars in order to make it possible for a substantial number of Americans to survive in the case of a nuclear attack.

Wheeler's reasoning is frankly expressed. He points out that two years ago the Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously recommended deployment of Nike-X, which would mean a counter to the anti-ballistic-missile system around Moscow and in other parts of the Soviet Union. He declares that the Russians are trying to reduce America's confidence in its ability to penetrate Soviet defenses, "thereby reducing the possibility that the United States would undertake a pre-emptive first strike against the Soviet Union, even under extreme provocation." He says:

"We believe that the Soviet offensive and defensive buildup does increase the risk of nuclear war. . . .

"Should the Soviets come to believe that their ballistic missile defense, coupled with a nuclear attack on the United States, would limit damage to the Soviet Union to a level acceptable to them, whatever that level is, our forces would no longer deter. The first principle of our security policy would be gone. . . .

"The 30, 40, or 50 million American lives that could be saved by Nike-X, therefore, are meaningful, we believe, in every sense of the word."

"Accordingly, Mr. Chairman, the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs that we now initiate deployment of Nike-X is based fundamentally on the requirement to maintain the total strategic nuclear capability or balance clearly in favor of the United States."

What the chairman of the Joint Chiefs argues is that nuclear balance could be stabilized. He adds that, in the view of the Joint Chiefs, "regardless of anyone's feelings about the situation in Vietnam," it is "quite clear that we would have had even more hesitation in deploying our forces there, had the strategic nuclear balance not been in our favor."

To preserve the nuclear balance, of course, means huge expenditures, both for the Soviet Union and the United States.

The facts now coming out emphasize that the most acute issue before the world is the necessity for an agreement limiting nuclear power hereafter and assuring some effective system of mutual inspection so that agreements will not be violated.

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* Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense, House Committee on Appropriations: "Department of Defense Appropriations for 1968" Part 2

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